

[W. C. Haley]

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Beliefs and customs - Occupational lore

Annie McAulay

Maverick Texas

Runnels County Interview

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COWBOY LORE

W. C. (Bob) Haley) was born in The State of Mississippi in 1874. He / moved with his parents to Texas in 1878. The family settled on a cattle ranch near Novice , Coleman County. They lived there eleven years . and / In 1889 they moved to Coke County. Mr. Hayleys Haley's father bought a ranch near Hayrick, then the county [?], seat, / Where he lived until his death.

Mr. Hayley Haley says , ' " my My father was a pioneer stockman in West Texas. I began riding as soon as I was old enough to staddle saddle a horse. My father always kept some gentle saddle horses for we us kids and mother to ride. I began riding the range and helping work cattle for my father before or at least in my very early teens. I learned some about the ways of cattle and men on my fathers father's ranch. My father He taught me to treat all men honest and square and expect the same from them. " When I was abut grown, I got a job with / The Harris Bros. outfit. They owned a forty section ranch south of Robert Lee and kept a big-outfit. It was partly open range then although / There were some fences. In working the herds in the spring or fall, / We'd round up one bunch in one section of the pasture, cut the stuff we wanted and brand the young stuff there that day.

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Then we'd go on to another part the next day and continue until we'd worked the whole ranch. C12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 " I remember the first spring we lived in Coke county, it had been awful dry. The streams had nearly all dried up. We were rounding up . and / The boss said some of the cattle would have to be moved where there was more water and grass or be sold. As if to play a joke on us after we had most of the herd worked, / It began raining one night , and it poured for several days. We had to quit work . ; / Just took out 'til the rain let up. Boy but everybody Everybody was shore glad to see that rain. I never was on any very long cattle drives. " I made a coule couple of trips to the Texas Plains . and I reccolect recollect we always tried to pick a place that was level and open to bed the cattle and make camp at night . as It was easier to keep them together in that way. Cattle was were very easy disturbed. Sometimes a horse would snort or a rabbit jump up near the herd and frighten some of them and get them to stirring. And once they got started , the riders had to get started too. " I remember on one of our trips we had to ride all night long. We were trying our dead level best to get the herd quieted. We never knew , but [?] it was perhaps some small animal that frightened them. We rode like thunder and tried to get in [?] the lead of them. We did manage to sort of keep them bunched together, and when we finnally finally got them to following [?] of the riders and milling. They trotted awhile then walked and then Then they stopped and began lying / down. I can tell you we was all plenty tired next day. 3 " The boys I worked with were usually full of fun and liked nothing better than a good joke. I remember once during a grand big spring round-up we were camped near Cedar Mountain and at that time there was quite a bit of wild stuff-animals I mean- in them parts. Some of the boys had roped a wild-cat and brought him into camp that day. That night after supper we was all grouped around or near the the fire , smoking and discussing our days day's work. The wildcat was tied with a rope and was lying on the ground nearby. John Hasey, our cook, was sitting with his back to the fire and directly in front of the big kitty kitten .

Dick Castlebury, who was always up to some trick, heated an iron in the fire and told us he was going to have some fun. When the iron was hot he applied it to what he thought was

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a sleeping cat , [?] expecting him to lunge toward the cook . , / But instead , he jumped high into the air with an awful squall and / Jumped back for Dick. He nearly tore his clothes off befor before he managed to back out of his reach. The joke was on old Dick and the boys just doubled up with laughter. They shore sure enjoyed razzing him about that trick . after that. “ I knew several good riders , but I believe / Old John Hargroves, who worked for Spades outfit when I did , was about as good as I ever saw. He could ride anything, steers and broncs too.

I remember once while there, there was an old steer about seven years old, / Never had a rope on him. He was a booger to catch and a fighter too.

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Our boss , Mr. Arnett , told us boys if we coud drive that steer in and catch him we could have him.

Well, / Old Hargroves went out one day on his horse, rode up beside ole old big'ne and jumped a- straddle of him. The old steer pitched and [?] reared , but I'll be dadblamed if he did'nt ride him into to the pen. John could shore sure ride -/ Wild steers as well as broncs. “

Bibliography

W. C. Hayley Haley, Bronte Texas. Pioneer citizen and cowhand of Coke County.
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RANGE-LORE

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"When I was about grown, I got a job with the Harris brothers' outfit. They owned a forty section ranch south of Robert Lee and kept a big outfit. It was partly open range then, although there were some fences. In working the herds in the spring or fall, we'd round up one bunch in one section of the pasture, cut the stuff we wanted and brand the young stuff there that day. Then we'd go on to another part the next day and continue until we'd worked the whole ranch.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

W. C. Haley, Bronte, Texas, interviewed March 21, 1938.